

# The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, August 12. 1693.

Gentlemen,

**Quest. 1.** I Have had the Ill Fortune, though sent twice to you, never to have an Answer to any Question, which I think a little hard: Pray a speedy Answer to this following Question, which has gone thro' a treble Postage. — *Why an Eye in a Picture should be the same every way? Or thus, to make it more intelligible, When a Picture is drawn from any Person, who in sitting looks on the Painter's Eye, why doth the Picture look every way, whereas the Person in sitting looks but one, and if he should look any other way in drawing, the Picture would look also but one way, whereas now it looks directly on as many Persons as can come to see it? I hope 'tis intelligible: I desire your full Answer, for 'tis a pretty strange thing. If you consider it again with a piece of Sculpture, there the Eye will look but one way.*

*Answer.* The reason is very evident, the Original is in Solido, but the Copy in Plano; 'tis very true, I cannot see a Man's Eye if he turns his Face half from me, because the Eminencies of his Cheeks, Hair, &c. may intervene, and hinder me from seeing the Eye; but where a Face is pourtray'd in Plano, all is even, and there's nothing to intervene, which side soever of the room you stand in, you see the whole as it was drawn; and the Eye being the most remarkable in the Face, the Observation has been made rather of that than any other part, tho' 'tis the same of the Nose-end, the Lip, or any Spot upon the Picture, which will present it self to you which way soever you look upon it.

**Quest. 2.** Pray what's the Reason that our Ideas of Matter, and our Operations in Matter copy'd from those Ideas, are so very distinct?

*Answer.* It flows from our Imperfection, as Agents, a perfect Agent, such as God is, acts according to his Ideas, thus God made the whole World in that excellent Beauty, Order and Harmony, which he had before conceived in himself, and even our own Ideas of things (I mean of Matter and its Accidents) are very distinct and adequate in the Abstract, I can very easily conceive how a Line of a quarter of an Inch may be exactly divided into a thousand parts, and each of these subdivided into a thousand more; but when I come to involve this Idea of Division and Sub-division in Matter, I'm at a loss, and should not only find it a difficult Undertaking actually to divide this quarter of an Inch into five hundred parts, but also how to make any two of those parts precisely equal: This Consideration has suggested to me that God Almighty's Operations in Matter are exactly Analogous to our Conceptions in the Abstract, (which by the by argues our Souls to be of Divine Extraction.) We can have a true Idea of the sharpness of the Sting of a Bee or of a Nettle, and when we examine these with the finest Microscope, we find they Terminate according to the Idea we have of them, but if with the same Microscope we look at our own Operation of involving the Idea of sharpness in Matter; for instance in a fine Needles Point, it appears blunt and craggy; thus we have a true Notion of Smoothness, and can find it in the Scales of a Flea, and other things, tho' the finest Glais or polish'd Marble, appear as uneven and rough as a fil'd piece of Iron, and the Eminences will reflect the light, as the sides of rising Hills and Mountains do.

**Quest. 3.** In the Year 1580. at Spalduck in Huntingdonshire there happened a strange thing: Mr. Dorrington, one of the Gentlemen Pensioners to Queen Elizabeth, had a

Horse which dyed suddenly, and being open'd to find the Cause of his Death, there was found in his Heart a Worm of a wonderful Form; as it lay together in a Caul or Skin it resembled a Toad, but being taken thence the shape was hard to be described, the length of it divided into 80 Grains, which spread from the Body like the Branches of a Tree, was from the Snout to the end of the longest Grain 17 Inches, having 4 Issues in the Grains, from whence dropped a Red Water; the Body was 3 Inches and an half about, the Coller being like that of a Mackerel: This prodigious Worm crawling about to get away, was killed with a Dagger, and being dyed was shewed to many Honourable Persons as a great Rarity: See the Author of the Admirable Curiosities, Rarities and Wonders in England, p. 110. Your Opinion of this is desired?

*Answer.* You have an Answer to a Question of much the same Nature in a late Mercury.

**Quest. 4.** Wherefore do we Christians make Easter a moveable Feast, and depend upon the Moon, as if it were the Jewish Passover, which, we say, was abolished at our Saviours Death, and never more to be celebrated, either by Jew or Gentile. *Altho' our Saviours Passion was at the time of the Passover, to the intent that it might be publick and notorious, yet there seems no Reason why Easter should be so variously celebrated in respect of Time, as it is by us Christians, and that in one and the same Church: Because our Saviours Passion, as well as his Nativity, was upon a certain determinate day; and therefore why should not Easter as well as Christmasts be a fixed Feast?*

*Objection.* If you Object, that the Nativity of our Saviour may be kept upon any day of the Week, but the Passion must be on a Friday, and therefore it cannot always be upon the same day of the Month wherein our Saviour suffered:

*Why should it not be kept upon the very day of the Month, when that happens on a Fryday, and in other Years upon the Fryday following?*

*Answer.* The Apostles (especially those of the Circumcision) did extremely Judaize and comply with the Customs of the Jews (as far as the Essentials of Christianity would permit) on purpose to Gain them, nay even St. Paul an Apostle of the Gentiles, became all to all that he might gain some, whereby many Jewish Traditions, as Baptism and the Imposition of Hands, (tho' Principles of the Christian Religion) are as to their external Mode (tho' not end nor design) borrow'd from the Jewish Practice and Customs; and supposing the times of reckoning so settled at first, it is very necessary (not in their own Nature but by accident) to retain them, since the Alteration would produce greater Distractions and Inconveniences than the making new Accounts would do good; for so long as there are no Essentials in Religion, there can no damage accrue by the Practice of 'em; tho' indeed after all, I know not why we should be abhorrent of the Jews and their Customs, more than those of other Countreys, since they are our Elder Brethren, Children of the same Father Abraham (at least those of them that walk in his Steps) and that Stock into which we are grafted, and God can when he pleases graft them in again, and may we know not how soon for our Impieties break us off.

**Quest. 5.** Gent. My small Talent, and my time being for the most part Employed about Subterraneous concerns, and in a reserv'd corner of the World, where Philosophy's treated and practis'd like Devotion, and that's with an Uncourtness and Barbarous Indifferency, it was but very lately that the notice of your Undertaking Occur'd to me, and I have but yet had the satisfaction of few of your Mercury's, the Generous Enterprize

terpize I extreamly Applaud, and from the passion I have in true wishes for a due Encouragment to you in the Progress, I'm emboldned to trouble you with a few Queries, making it the greatest, whether any of 'em may be Pertinent enough for, and worthy of your return; I mean well in them however, and I hope your Resentments will be as favourable, and that you'll believe me to your Society without reserve, *Sirs, An unfeigned will-wisher, and humble Servant.*

1. *What's the reason of a Hasell's tendency to a Vein of Lead-Oar, and whether there be any Charm in it, as those (I suppose) may mean, who limit making the Experiment to St. John Baptist's Eve, and that with an Hasell of that same years growth, if the cause be Natural, whether any Hasell and any time of the Year may be prosperous?*

2. *The Miners in some Lead-works, when any's almost suffocated through want of Air, even in a manner struck dead, do get him drawn to the Surface, take up a fresh Twiff, and lay his face in the hole, which immediately recovers him, I desire the Reason?*

3. *In melting Lead-Oar with Wood, sometimes with Wood and Coal, commonly 32 pound of Oar produces about 21 pounds of Lead, I desire the reason of such loss, and if it be (as is most likely) by Evaporation, the Mills having low, strait, and wide Chimneys, whether a contrivance to convey the smoke more leisurely and intricately, might not make the product greater?*

4. *The Jewish Year is Commonly reckon'd to 354 days, I desire to know on what grounds the Calculation is so made, for it seems to me the 7th. Genesis, that 17 d. of the 2d month Commences, and the 17 of the 7th. Month concludes the 150 ds. which makes 30 ds. to a Month, those Months then being Consecutive and uninterrupted, and no Scripture limiting any other Months, why each of the 12 Months may not as rationally and probably be supposed to contain 30 as well as any other number of days.*

*Ans. 1.* The thing is certainly matter of Fact for the most part, tho not always, and no doubt but there's a natural reason for it, possibly this, the Exhalation of the vapours raised from these Minerals (supposing they can effect any thing) must act more powerfully upon the sides of Hazel-Trees which are next them, which also is probably nutritious, and being imbib'd by the pores of the Hazel, causes a faster growth on that side than the other, and by consequence like a natural balance, the heavier Side draws the lighter, and a natural Gravitation inclines it that way; if it be demanded why hazels have this property more than other Trees? We answer, 'tis probably the Constriction of the pores thereof, which either through their shape or nature of the plant may Facilitate the effect sooner than others. But for a Hazel's natural tendency to Gold, Silver, &c. when out of the Vegetative stock, as also the Gold or Silver out of the Vein wherein it liv'd and encreas'd, is altogether improbable, and does certainly owe its rise to a Company of Idle Superstitious Fools, who believe any thing; and perhaps have been perswaded by some extraordinary Operation of the Devil, who for his own interest may Act upon Bodies to gain Profelytes, and fix the doubting in such a Superstition.

2. As the Sea-Water by draining through the secret Subterraneous passages of the Earth, divests it self of all its salt humours, so also the Air is best cleans'd that way, tho possibly the Earth which after so wonderful a manner conveys Radical Moisture to Plants, &c. may have such Spirits in it as may Sympathize with the Vital heat of a Man, and help on with such aforesaid recoveries.

3. Yes very probably there might be a greater product, but then the whole Mass would retain the dross, (for it must be some where) and so the Courteness of the Metal would endamage the whole as much as the full Evaporation takes from the product.

4. For this see a late *Mercury* which treats largely on the times that the year ought to begin, and what alterations, &c. have been made.

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